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SACRED ODES, &c.

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SACRED ODES:

OR

PSALMS OF DAVID,

PARAPHRASED FROM THE

ORIGINAL HEBREW.

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SACRED ODES.

PSALM I.

BLEST man, *whoſe* ſteps, by ſacred wiſdom led,
Have ſhunn'd thoſe paths which erring ſinners tread!
Whoſe high-bent aims and nobler thoughts deſpiſe
The ſordid ſchemes which impious hearts deviſe;
Vain chaſe of wealth, of pleaſure, pride, and pow'r,
All air-blown bubbles of a fleeting hour,
Which tort'ring paſſions urge them on to gain,
Dear-bought with crimes, and all the purchaſe pain.
Bleſt man, *whoſe* uninfected thoughts deteſt
The fool's vain ſarcaſm and licentious jeſt;
When ſcoffing infidels with haughty pride
Religion's unſeen myſteries deride.

His nobler joys, ſerene, refin'd, and pure,
Exalt the ſoul, and like the ſoul endure;
While heav'nly laws, bleſt ſource of true delight,
By day revolv'd he meditates by night.
Like ſome young vigorous tree by rivers fed
He ſeems, whoſe branches o'er the current ſpread:
His ſmiling leaves eternal verdure boaſt,
Unhurt by ſultry winds or chilling froſt:
No pois'nous blaſt his early bloſſoms fear,
No ruder gale deſtroys th' unripen'd year;
But ſtill his boughs to mellow'd Autumn bring
Each ample promiſe of luxuriant Spring.

Unlike to this the miſerable ſtate
Of impious men, and far unlike their fate:
As winnow'd chaff in whirling eddies toſt,
The ſport of winds, in quick oblivion loſt.

For when that laſt tremendous day ſhall come,
Which faſt approaches, big with final doom,
To huſh to ſilence impious tongues, and ſhow
That heav'n was juſt which rul'd affairs below,

To bid all ſeeming-contradiction ceaſe,
And prove that virtue trod the paths of peace,
Then long-ſuſpended vengeance ſhall be ſhed,
In ample meaſure, on each guilty head;
And impious men regard with envious eyes
That righteous train whom now their hearts deſpiſe.

For he, whoſe unavoided glances dart
Deep to the cloſe concealments of the heart,
Diſcerns thoſe ardent hopes and humble truſt
Which glow within the boſoms of the juſt;
And crimes, though ſhaded under tenfold night,
Attempt in vain to ſhun his piercing ſight;
Their momentary triumph ſoon is paſt,
And ſure deſtruction waits them at the laſt.

PSALM II.

WHY burning with ſeditious rage
Do thus the banded nations riſe?
Does earth's frail offspring think to wage
A frantic war againſt the skies?
In cloſe divan conſulting all
Behold the monarchs of the ball,
Their ſtrength againſt heav'n's King to try,
And his MESSIAH's power defy!

" Shall we, tame ſlaves, without diſdain
" See proffer'd ignominious bands?
" Free-born let's burſt their galling chain,
" And daſh their fetters from our hands."
But he who veil'd from human eyes
Sits thron'd above the vaulted skies
The noiſy tumult ſhall deride,
And mock their vain rebellious pride.

Then wak'd to wrath, that voice ſhall ſound
Whereat earth's firm foundations quake;
Their dark abortive aims confound,
And their ſlack'd nerves with horror ſhake.
" My King from this power-giving hand
" Derives unlimited command;
" And o'er my ſacred mount ſhall reign,
" Though baffled envy rage in vain."

Hear heav'n's decree rehearſed now;
For me th' Eternal thus addreſt:
" My ſon, this day begot, art thou:
" Ask, and inherit thy requeſt.
" Thine ſhall each nation be that lies
" Beneath the concave of the skies;
" And earth's vaſt limits own thy reign,
" Where'er her ſhores repel the main.

" Cruſh'd by thine iron ſceptre's weight
" Vain oppoſition ſoon ſhall die;
" Like earth-form'd veſſel ſhatter'd ſtreight,
" Rebellion at thy feet ſhall lie."

Ye monarchs, hence inſtruction draw ;
Learn mortal Gods, whoſe voice is law,
Exulting on a dazzling throne,
To ſerve a power above your own.

With low ſubmiſſive rev'rence down
To filial godhead haſte to bend,
Leſt ruin from his angry frown
Your ſhorten'd race of glory end.
Incenſe not him, to whom 'tis giv'n
To graſp the thunderbolts of heav'n.
Bleſt only they whoſe homage paid,
With faithful heart, ſecures his aid.

PSALM XX.

'MIDST hoſtile tumults, and the field's alarms,
The ſhock of warring hoſts, and claſh of arms,
May heav'n's dread Lord, attentive to thy pray'r,
Watch o'er thy ſafety ſtill with guardian care.
From that majeſtic unapproach'd retreat
Where Jacob's adoration holds his ſeat,
And, awfully withdrawn from human eyes,
On Zion deigns to rule beneath the skies,
Let him auxiliary ſtrength afford,
Add vigour to thy arm, and terror to thy ſword.
Stretch'd on his altar when thy victim lies,
Depriv'd of life, and ripe for ſacrifice,
Or bloodleſs offerings from the teeming ſoil,
The wheat's fine core, ſweet gums, and fragrant oil,
Let ſwift etherial flame thy gifts conſume,
And heav'n well-pleas'd accept the rich perfume;
Grant ev'ry wiſh thy heart contains, and bleſs
Thy well-plann'd counſels with deſerv'd ſucceſs.

Soon back from fight thy brows with laurels bound,
Our ſhouts ſhall hail thee come without a wound;

For truſting more-than-mortal aid we go
With waving enſigns on to meet the foe.
Hence joyful vict'ry ſhall confirm thy reign,
And heav'n for thee be ne'er implor'd in vain.
Omnipotence, I know, will guard that head
Whereon the hallow'd regal oil was ſhed;
Conduct thee through the battle's dreadful ſtrife,
And crown thy vows with conqueſt and with life.

Let others arm with ſcythes the rattling car,
To waſte with griding edge the ranks of war;
Or train the fiery ſteed with headlong force
To cruſh their foes, reſiſtleſs in his courſe;
The ſtrength we bring to face th' embattled field
Is GOD's great name, at once our ſpear and ſhield.
Them, proſtrate, fall'n with all their boaſted power,
The hungry cannibals of air devour;
While undiſcomfited, erect, upright,
We drink the vital air, and view the light.
Our Safety *ſtill* be thou, great LORD of all;
Eternal King, ſtill hear our ſuppliant call.

PSALM XLIX.

YE ſhort-liv'd race, inhabitants of earth,
Attend; hear this each one of mortal birth;
Whate'er thy fate, to wealth and titles born,
Or doom'd to ſtruggle under want and ſcorn.
My mouth ſhall wiſdom's oracles impart,
Already form'd within my penſive heart.
Liſt then, while to the lyre's according ſtring
Theſe long forgot myſterious truths I ſing.

When pale diſeaſe and feeble age,
Sure harbingers of coming fate,
Conclude life's haſty pilgrimage,
And ſhew the grave's dark horrid gate,
Shall I then ſtartle with affright
To think of death's approaching night,
With fools that innocence have ſold,
And barter'd faith and truth for gold?

Vain man, whom wealth inflates with pride,
(Fallacious idol of thy truſt)
By frenzy prompted to confide
In hoarded heaps of glitt'ring duſt;—
Say, when a brother's eye-balls roll,
And fate demands the ſtruggling ſoul,
Canſt thou retard the parting breath,
Or ſtay the lifted ſtroke of death?

Induc'd by nature's deareſt ties
Now try thy power to ſet him free,
And tempt the Sov'reign of the skies
To change for gold his high decree.
But ah! no treaſures here ſuffice
To pay th' immeaſurable price:
No age ſhall ſee the ranſom giv'n:
No bribes revoke the doom of heav'n.

Of Death's inexorable rage
Perpetual triumphs we ſurvey;
The fool, the venerable ſage,
Together quit the light of day;

And treaſures late reputed theirs
Enrich their long-deſiring heirs;
Yet, ever-obſtinate in ill,
Men graſp the ſame vain phantoms ſtill.

In all the pride of regal ſtate
They bid their marble domes aſcend:
In theſe, with airy hopes elate,
They dream of pleaſures without end.
The rich uſurper ſees his reign
Invade each neighbouring domain;
And lands that ſtock his wealthy board
New-titled from their haughty lord.

But ſhort the momentary glare
Of all that dazzles mortal eyes;
The glittering bubbles burſt in air;
With reptiles now the great man lies.
Conſult experience; in her ſchool
Ambition ſtill was proved a fool:
In vain; ſucceeding ages tread
The frantic paths their fathers led.

Like victims thoughtleſs of their doom,
A moment robs them of their breath;
Then plung'd into tremendous gloom,
They glut the rav'nous vulture Death:
And when the diſmal night is paſt,
And dreaded morning dawns at laſt,
Stript of their glories in the duſt,
Their pride ſhall bow before the Juſt.

But I undaunted, undiſmay'd
Await my certain deſtin'd hour,
Secure that heav'n's all-potent aid
Will free me from the grave's dark power.
Unhurt my deathleſs part ſhall riſe
New tenant of the bliſsful skies,
And ſpite of Death's uſurping reign
Yet animate theſe limbs again.

Let not thy fond admiring eye
Behold the rich with rapt'rous gaze,
Nor if proud honours lift him high
Let rival wiſhes envy raiſe:

His dying graſp ſhall ſoon let go
The wealth his folly worſhipp'd ſo ;
And pomp and ſtate ſhall find no room
To lodge beſide him in the tomb.

Though here in pleaſure's lap he lie,
With eaſe and luxuries oppreſt,
Though wing'd with joys his moments fly,
And vain opinion think him bleſt,
His ſteps ſhall ſeek the ſilent road
To his forefathers laſt abode,
Where no kind glimmering of light
E'er gilds the horrid gloom of night.

View man, the creature of a day,
In honour's trappings proudly dreſt,
If wiſdom's intellectual ray
Ne'er ſhone within his darken'd breaſt,
Spite of this glitt'ring pomp, we ſee
The beaſts as high in rank as he;
Equal they ſeem to reaſon's eye,
And ſenſe perceives it when they die.

PSALM CXVII.

YE nations, whereſoever found,
Diſpers'd o'er earth's capacious round,
Who freeze in regions yet unknown,
Or pant beneath the burning zone,
From your lips let anthems riſe
To the Monarch of the skies;
Let your new-taught voices ſing
Praiſe to heav'n's Eternal King.

For now his mercy never-ending
Appears all former bounds tranſcending:
His truth, unſhook in ages paſt,
To ev'ry coming age ſhall laſt.
Haſte your grateful tribute bring;
Hallow'd hymns of rapture ſing;
Let your choral voices raiſe
Hallelujahs in his praiſe.

PSALM CXXXVII.

WHILE by the ſtream whoſe wealthy tide
Rolls through the midſt of Babel's pride
With melancholy hearts we ſate,
Rememb'ring Zion's hapleſs fate,
Freſh at the thought our ſorrows riſe,
And drown'd in tears our guſhing eyes.
The water-loving willow ſtood
Along the margin of the flood;
And our forgotten harps, unſtrung,
Upon the drooping branches hung.
When, lo! our unrelenting foes,
Hard-hearted authors of our woes,
Who fetter'd us with cruel hand,
And dragg'd from our beloved land,
While, turning oft, our eyes ſurvey'd
Jeruſalem in ruins laid,
Our maſters now, with lordly air,
Bid us, their ſlaves, our harps prepare;

To ſprightly ſtrains awake the ſtring,
And ſome glad ſong of Zion ſing.
Can we with ſadden'd hearts employ
The lyre, or waken thoughts of joy?
Shall we, confin'd in ſervile chain,
Our hallow'd, native hymns profane,
While baniſh'd from our ſacred land
We dread a tyrant's harſh command?
O Salem! raviſh'd from my ſight!
Dear ruin'd heaps, my ſoul's delight!
If e'er the thought of thee depart,
If thy rememb'rance leave my heart,
Then let my tongue forget to ſing,
My fingers how to move the ſtring,
Unleſs thy mem'ry, mournful gueſt,
Alone ſhall occupy my breaſt;
Above each idle pleaſure riſe,
And heave it with eternal ſighs.

O thou, great arbiter of fate,
Remember Edom's ranc'rous hate;

Whoſe cruel children, when they ſpy'd
Jerus'lem's fall, exulting cry'd,
" Raze, raze her ſtructures to the ground,
" Nor let one trace of her be found."

But thou, proud miſtreſs of the Eaſt,
In ſpoils of plunder'd nations dreſt,
My longing eyes await thy doom,
And ſee thy ruin ſoon to come.
Thrice bleſs'd the man, decreed to ſhed
Heav'n's wrath on thy devoted head!
Stern executioner, deſign'd
To pay thy cruelties in kind:
Who, deaf to pity, ſhall deſpiſe
Fond mothers tears and piercing cries;
Snatch from the breaſt their helpleſs brood,
And dye thy ſtreets with infant blood.

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